



# Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide

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March 23, 2020  
20/118

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Firstly, my thoughts are with those of you who are the front line of our new regulations. I thought of you all with gratitude over the weekend as you cared for each other and for those experiencing distress and anxiety about all that is happening. Everyone is suffering, many are confused and fearful, and I thank you deeply for your pastoral patience and kindness for those in your care.

Please note that this note is simply an attempt to respond quickly to immediate concerns that have been raised.

If you have not yet seen Bishop O'Kelly's YouTube then I commend it to you. It can be viewed on the home page of the Adelaide Archdiocese website [www.adelaide.catholic.org.au](http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au) or via the Archdiocese Facebook page.

We have sought clarification regarding the new directions made by Prime Minister Scott Morrison last night. Following consultation with the Australian Catholic Bishops Commission, I now confirm that with immediate effect:

1. All churches must now be closed, even to private prayer.
2. All public Masses and communal devotions inside churches and outdoors are suspended in the Archdiocese.
3. All except priests are dispensed from the obligation of Sunday Mass. A variety of ways the faithful are encouraged to keep the Sunday holy include: prayer at home; reading the Scriptures of the day; praying for the graces they would normally receive in Holy Communion; prayerfully joining Mass online or by television. (We will publish details for access shortly.)
4. Priests are asked to celebrate Mass for and on behalf of their people and their needs, and for the needs of all those affected by Coronavirus. Mass and Divine Office for the Sick, for Any Need, and Votive masses of Our Lady of Lourdes may be prayed
5. Funerals: are permitted for "very small groups" of immediate family and closest friends, but hygiene and social distancing regulations must be observed. In effect this means that two arm's length distance must be observed between all present. The church must be closed to others once the small group has assembled or the permitted numbers for the space of the church have been achieved. Please work with Funeral Directors to ensure this. Non-compliance can result in legal sanctions.

6. Baptisms: should be deferred for at least the next six months where possible. In case of urgent pastoral necessity a baptism may be celebrated by a priest, or if necessary by a lay person, ensuring that all hygiene and social distancing regulations are observed.
7. Weddings: may be celebrated in church, only with “very small groups” of immediate family and closest friends in attendance, ensuring all hygiene and distancing regulations are observed. The church must be closed once the small group has assembled or the permitted number for the space has been achieved. In these circumstances the deferral of weddings is an option to consider with the couple.
8. Sacrament of Reconciliation: assemblies for the second or third form of the Rite are prohibited. Priests may and should respond to individual requests for individual for the sacrament, so long as hygiene and distancing regulations are observed, but may not advertise or open the church for Reconciliation.
9. Viaticum: clergy should make themselves available for pastoral care of those who are dying, observing all the regulations for hygiene and distancing so far as possible, along with the protocols established by care homes, prisons, hospitals and other institutions. Clergy who are at higher risk are advised to invite priests at less risk to administer Viaticum or the Sacrament of Anointing. Imposition of hands can be conferred by holding hands over rather than on the head, and anointing by the medium of a cotton ball or bud, or protective glove. Anointing of the head will be sufficient.
10. Availability: clergy must make sure that their parishioners can contact them in emergencies.
11. Gatherings for preparation for first Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist are not permitted and need to be deferred for the time being.
12. Some pastoral suggestions:
  - a. Please encourage neighbours, parishioners and friends to support each other through prayer, regular phone calls, cooking and shopping for the housebound and isolated, and every means of spiritual and social connection possible.
  - b. Clergy are invited to employ time now freed from normal pastoral duties to keep in touch with their congregations over the next months by phone calls or other social media.
  - c. Regular visitors to the sick are encouraged to use their regular time of visit to phone, FaceTime, Skype etc.

Once again I assure you of my grateful and prayerful support for you all,

With fraternal regards,

Fr Philip Marshall  
**Administrator Delegate**